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Ground Zero News

May 1994 Volume 2, No. 5

And They DID Come....

The old proverb "Out of Little Acorns Mighty Oaks Grow" is particularly appropriate in describing the progress of the Cheshire Ball.

In December, when several Ground Zero people began talking about the need to do something about the ballooning incidents of child abuse across America and in Colorado, we had little thought that so successful an event as was the Cheshire Ball would be the result. Nonetheless, we started exploring the possibilities.

Ground Zero President, Katherine Pease, and Frank Whitworth, Administrative Director for Ground Zero, were charged with the duty of selling the idea to a group that had been gathered in Denver with the help of Out Front's Bruce Chopnik. They included Pat Romero and Vicki of Denver PFLAG, Mason Lewis of KNUS, Shawn Finnegan of Marriott International, Bruce Chopnik, and Tim Gill of the Gill Foundation. We walked into the Wynkoop meeting room believing that we would get twenty minutes to succeed or fail.

The idea immediately developed a life of its own and that night, after 4.5 hours of serious work, The Cheshire Ball was born. The initial committee expanded to include Sue Anderson of Equality and the official sponsors included the above with the addition of KBDI TV, NORWEST Banks, The Human Rights Campaign Fund and Quark Software.

The night of the Ball arrived and somewhere between the performance of the Denver Opera and the Dean Bushnell orchestra playing "IN THE MOOD" it came to us the enormity of what we had accomplished. On the dance floor were a myriad of people from all walks of life, men dancing with men, women with women and men with women, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual, etc. All had come together for the purpose of making a statement. Its time to stop the accusations as to "WHO DID WHAT?" and to begin asking "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?" about the society wide problem threatening our children.

Four hundred and fifty attendees donated enough to make a significant impact on the budget of the Child Protection Team of The Denver Children's Hospital and to significantly help two Colorado Springs Groups, Citizens for Child Justice and KIDPOWER.
Beyond that, however, was a sense that this was just a beginning.

The Cheshire Committee is pledged to carry on with other benefit activities. There is even talk of the event going national next year, with Balls occurring across America on the same night.

So many people donated their services and goods to the success of this event, including printers donating the great invitations, Quark employees putting them together, NORWEST donating the place for the party, Western Distributing and Gunoc Vineyards coming up with the beverage along with the Wynkook, COCOLOCO supplying the dinner chocolates, Country Club Flowers and Colorado Springs Floral donating the centerpieces, posters printed free, free TV and radio ads and thousands of individually donated man hours lovingly given, that the designated beneficiaries will receive healthy checks.

Colorado Springs' own PICNIC BASKET won the catering contract and went far beyond the call of duty. The food was great and the presentation was wonderful. Kathy and Michelle, and their who gang, are owed a debt of gratitude.

Ground Zero receives GTE grant

April was National Volunteer Month and Ground Zero benefited when a member volunteered time and was rewarded through her employer's Volunteer Initives Program (VIP).

GTE Government Systems (GSC) recognized and rewarded our Layout Editor, Buffy H. for her efforts working with Ground Zero. She is one of 103 employees nationwide to be recognized by GSC. GSC employees earned more than $75,000 for their nonprofit agencies in 1993, with 60 receiving the maximum award of $1000.

Ground Zero was awarded $1000.

The VIP program awards grants ranging from $100 to $1000 to nonprofit agencies at which employees have volunteered a minimum of 25 hours in a 12-month period. Buffy volunteered more than 200 hours in 1993.

Ground Zero is believed to be the first grass roots gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered supportive group to win such a grant from GTE. Ground Zero applauds GTE for recognizing their employees' volunteer efforts.

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Please Support Our Friends

Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church
730 N. Tejon
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Voice/Fax 719-634-3771

Rev. Nori J. Rost, Pastor

Worship Time Sunday, 5:00 PM
Office Hours Tue-Wed: 1 PM-9-PM, Thu-Fri: 9 AM-5 PM

The *Ground Zero Newsletter* is an authorized publication for members of Ground Zero. A condensed version is published for monthly distribution through friendly vendors to the general public. Contents of the *Ground Zero Newsletter* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the Board of Directors of Ground Zero. The editorial content is edited and prepared by the Newsletter staff/committee.

The Newsletter staff members are:
Sue R. - editor
Buffy H. - technical content/layout
Gail A. - distribution
Associate staff are members of the Networking Committee.

The *Ground Zero Newsletter* is published on the first day of each month. Submissions should be sent to P.O. Box 1982, Colorado Springs, CO 80901. Deadline for submission is the 15th of month prior to the month of publication. All submissions will be edited to conform with accepted style book standards.

NEW GIRLS IN TOWN

(New neighbors moved next to Ground Zero's office a few weeks ago. Christine Frost and Susan Swern crossed the great wasteland from Boston to begin a new life in the Vatican of Fundamentalism. Well, all of us at Ground Zero immediately fell in love with them and know you will too. We asked them to tell their story themselves.)

Two thousand and thirty miles clear across the country; from the sea to the mountains in one fell swoop! There wasn't a single person who was told of our plans to move to Colorado who didn't ask why—why would we want to move our Gay-owned publishing company to a state so seemingly intolerant of gays and lesbians? We could expect no support as a company headquartered in Colorado, They assured us, one and all.

We fashioned a few arguments to justify our throwing caution to the wind. The number one reason for moving our company, belongings, two dogs and a cat is simply that we LOVE Colorado. Neither of us were about to place our decision to relocate in the hands of any force flexing its muscled arm around the neck of our community. Indeed, it has felt more like a challenge from which we plan to exit winners.

Our most exciting publication, we might add, is EXODUS-The Gay and Lesbian International Events Guide. Moving our company to Colorado, we envisioned, might actually enhance its and our business' visibility. Indeed, the decision to move was far easier than the move itself.

Now that we've arrived in Colorado Springs, we are truly excited to be here for both professional and personal reasons. Instead of being frightened or dismayed, we're eager to contribute to a flourishing and proud gay and lesbian community. With Ground Zero as our new neighbors, we've already felt a connection. We look forward to a growing family of friends and associates in our breathtaking new home.

(Christine and Susan's business is called ARTEMIS Enterprises. You can reach them at (719) 636-9260).

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BON VOYAGE GROUND ZERO
by Katherine Pease

It is with sorrow and relief that I write this good-bye letter to the people of Ground Zero and the progressive community of Colorado Springs. I will be leaving our beautiful city the first week of May, in pursuit of further challenges and experiences. The feeling of sorrow that I experience comes from leaving a community that has shared so much with me, our pain and confusion over Amendment 2 and the influx of fundamentalists into Colorado Springs. The relief comes from bringing some semblance of normalcy back to my life.

Since April of 1992, when I first began working with EPOC to try to stop CFV and Amendment 2, I, like many others, have witnessed the blatant violation of my fundamental rights. As lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, our right to privacy, our right to participation in the political process, our right to free speech, and our right to walk down the street with the ones we love, have all been violated. Like others, my private life has been put up for public scrutiny by Colorado for Family Values. Their rhetoric has legitimized the a-moral positions of the thousands of homophobes living in our (geographically) beautiful city, creating pain and agony for many or all of us. Personally, I have been subject to the wrath of homophobic vandals, to harassing phone calls, and to verbal abuse on the streets.

So why did I stay in the battle for as long as I have when it has been so difficult? The answer is simple. For all of the pain that the past few years have brought, these years have brought wonderful experiences full of pleasures and positive challenges. I have met countless numbers of beautiful people who have opened their lives up to me and shared their good times and their bad times with me. I have become integrated into a community that truly reflects the diversity of this country, a community which, for the most part, respects our differences and encourages diversity to flourish. I have had the pleasure of working with other progressive movements, struggling with and ultimately growing from the cultural differences we have. I have begun to learn how to work with others who come from various backgrounds, including ethnic, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious and other backgrounds.

Most importantly, I have witnessed the development of an incredible organization and the growth of the gay and lesbian community of Colorado Springs. I have traveled and spoken with others around the country who concur that Ground Zero is, without a doubt, one of the most cohesive grass roots organizations in the country. And - as numerous national leaders have stated- the organization has more potential than almost all other of its type, to make a difference locally and even nationally. We have become a national resource for information and expertise within our movement. We are respected throughout the country for our organizing abilities, our ability to get things done and to work in coalition with other progressive movements. I am confident that with the support of the Colorado Springs community, (we need both mental and financial support), Ground Zero will continue to grow as it has for the last 1 1/2 years and become even more effective and powerful. I believe we should all look forward to the progress that Ground Zero will continue to make as it tries as best it can to listen to the needs and concerns of the community, and to continue to be an important voice for the community of Colorado Springs.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the many people who have been there making Ground Zero what it has become. Specifically, I would like to thank the entire Board of Directors and the Execute Committee of Ground Zero, as well as the wonderful people involved with EPOC. To the entire community, I extend my thanks to you for all of the support you have given Ground Zero and to me personally. The list of individuals who have been there for me is too long to expound upon, but there are two whom I want to personally thank before I leave. I send my sincere gratitude and love to both Paula Stacia (P.S.) Fournier and Frank Whitworth for everything they did for me and for the movement. Their support through the CURE Rally and all of the Ground Zero activities that I have been involved with, helped save me from myself and was critical to the success of the projects.

Good luck Ground Zero and keep up the great work!!

(Editor's note: Katherine, it is us, the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgendered community of Colorado Springs that should be thanking you for all YOUR time, energy and talents given in the name of Gay Rights. We will miss you, Katherine!)

NOMINATIONS

In last month's newsletter the Nominating Committee asked for submission of candidates for the vacating offices of Ground Zero. There were no submissions. Therefore, the following individuals have been nominated:

PRESIDENT	**ROBERT MONE**
VICE PRESIDENT	**FRANK MOSHER**
SECRETARY	**SALLY BISHOP**
TREASURER	**SUE ROSPAPA**

Support Team Reports

EDUCATION

The Education Support Team has had an active month, attending both several meetings of the District Eleven Charter School Committee and attending the El Paso County PTA General membership meeting.

Information on the Charter School is contained in an article elsewhere in this newsletter.

The PTA Meeting on the night of April 11 was pretty much as expected. State President Jan Haley presented the much attacked and maligned resolution and deftly fielded questions from a highly charged and prejudiced representation from our friends of Colorado for Family Values. Both Will and Kevin made a showing and were passing out more "factual" literature from the ever neutral and independent FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL. You know them. They're the group that Dr. James Dobson had to resign from as chairman because its political activity endangered Focus' 501 c 3 classification. Gary Bauer is their head propagandist now.

The reactionary right wingers did every thing in their power to divert, subvert and turn the meeting into a general melee. It is to the chairman's credit that she kept tight control. The meeting was intended to be informational for members of the PTA and she kept it directed to that purpose. A time limit was established. When it expired, she declared the meeting at an end. Right wingers attempted to extend the session but failed to obtain the two thirds majority required. They wished to pass a condemnation of the resolution. Interestingly enough, there were a number of people this writer identifies as "friendly" who did not choose to vote on the question of a time extension. When asked after why they had abstained, they all replied in general that they did not wish to limit full debate on the subject.

YOUTH ISSUES

Almost all of the efforts of this team was spent in support of the Cheshire Ball. Much time has been spent in attending meetings, on phone trees, selling tickets, etc. A report on the actual ball is to be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The team is concerned, however, with the attack being led against the welfare of Gay and Lesbian children and those perceived to be Gay and Lesbian by Colorado for Family Values. What we need to do is get these children help in the way of counseling and protecting that neither proselytizes, judges or preaches but, rather, helps protect them from physical and mental harassment in the public schools and gives them the tools to deal with their distress.

This is really the intent of the PTA Resolution, a resolution that, despite the claims of the hate mongers, generated out of a non-gay and lesbian committee appointed by the State Board of the PTA, who have a real and deep concern for all children, including those who are gay and lesbian or who are perceived by their peers to be so. CFV and their friends are making a political football of this issue and are, thereby, endangering the health and lives of many children who are so challenged. Choosing to take this tack increases their feeling of guilt, self-hate and insecurity and may further exacerbate their situation.

COMMUNITY WATCH

This team had members that attended both Republican and Democratic Caucuses and generally report that they were not only largely uneventful but, also, boring. The big news--Ken Grey, extreme right wing opponent who lost in a close race to Marcy Morrison is said to be stealthily seeking support to be nominated at the County Convention, defeating her reelection try in that manner. Many believe that he could possibly succeed but that, if a qualified democrat could be found, Gray could be easily defeated in the general election.

The news that Daphne Greenwood will run for State Treasurer and abandon her seat in the House leaves El Paso County with the possibility of losing its only Democrat in either the house or the senate. A good, strong candidate is being sought to fill this seat by the Democrats.

In addition, a Ground Zero representative attended the monthly meeting of the Human Relations Commission, where an attack on Ground Zero, specifically, and on gays and lesbians, in general, was launched. You'll find the whole story herein in an article devoted to that purpose.

GROUND ZERO IS A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION IT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT TO EXIST

FILL OUT THE MEMBERSHIP FORM AND MAIL IT AT ONCE IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY A MEMBER!!

If you are a member and haven't remembered how much it costs us to operate your organization each day lately, perhaps you would like to think of us now.

FOCUS THREATENS LEGAL ACTION AGAINST BBC

by Frank Whitworth

According to Charles Colville of the British Broadcasting Company, Focus on the Family, Dr. James Dobson's right wing fundamentalist organization, has threatened legal action against BBC for remarks in a BBC special about Gay Rights and Colorado's Amendment 2 that linked Focus on the Family and its founder, Dr. James Dobson, with anti-gay sentiment and with those who supported Amendment 2. Focus has strong ties to other evangelicals, including Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council.

The news special, "BACKS AGAINST THE WALL-GAY RIGHTS IN THE USA," was largely filmed in Colorado Springs, international headquarters for Dobson's mega empire of fundamentalism. It aired in early Winter, 1993. There are, indeed, a number of references to Focus in the document. BBC was present at the dedication ceremony of Focus' major complex in Colorado Springs, segments of which were aired on the BBC program.

A recording of Dr. Dobson's voice was played on the special (one believes it to be a selection from one of his radio programs) in which Dr. Dobson says,

"...and specifically we need people who are willing to distribute information and promote the idea to vote yes on Amendment 2 and stop special rights for homosexuals."

In the BBC special, statements were made such as:

"In Colorado, Focus on the Family supported the Amendment 2 Campaign to make special rights to protect gays illegal. Dr. Dobson preached their anti-gay rights message to Colorado through his radio network."

and, in reference to Pat Robertson,

...he [Robertson] lent his assistance to Dr. Dobson's Colorado Campaign against gay rights.

Gay rights activists in Colorado Springs (designated by some as the Vatican of Fundamentalism), including those affiliated with GROUND ZERO, an educational and community outreach organization in Colorado Springs dealing with gay and lesbian concerns, have expressed little doubt as to the influence of Dobson and Focus. According to Katherine Pease, Ground Zero President and an organizer of the Colorado No On 2 Campaign, "Focus was a presence. Their anti-gay literature surfaced in the Colorado for Family Values Pro 2 campaign and some of their key players were also key players in CFV's infrastructure. Dr. Dobson and his Focus team often used their avenues of public education to introduce anti-gay and lesbian rhetoric. Seemingly, this was designed to create fear and mistrust. Information contained in its very inflammatory anti-gay booklet, "THE HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA--WHAT YOU CAN DO" was also found in the Colorado for Family Values pro Amendment 2 campaign. This was all meant to bring about an atmosphere that permitted the passage of the amendment."

There are many indications that Focus on the Family had a significant interest in the Amendment 2 Campaign and in anti-gay activities. Literature published by Colorado for Family Values lists Randy Hicks, Public Policy Representative for Focus on the Family, as a member of its Advisory Board and other literature lists Focus on the Family as one of a number of national groups backing Colorado for Family Values.

Focus officials deny that they have an overriding political interest and deny their involvement in Amendment 2. Others disagree, including the religious watch organization, People for the American Way, who issued a statement on April 29th, 1993 calling for "...James Dobson to acknowledge his [political agenda]."

The conservative Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph Newspaper carried an article (3/7/93, p. A1) by staff reporter Warren Epstein in which Epstein said, "...the passage of Amendment 2, authored by Springs-based Colorado for Family Values and pushed by Focus and other Christian organizations, is evidence of the power evangelicals can wield."

In a separate article, "The Ministry of Influence" (3\8\93 p. A1), in the same paper, Epstein and co-author Rick Ansorge state that "...Focus is really dedicated to a single enterprise: The influence business." The article goes on to say that Dobson wants to be a viable influence on such subjects as "...rock lyrics, feminism, gay rights, school prayer and abortion-while at the same time avoiding controversy. More than anything else, Dobson wants to keep Focus from being perceived as a political organization. In Colorado Springs, Focus has used the Rocky Mountain Family Council to help coordinate the efforts of disparate conservative political groups and has been involved in several issues while staying behind the scenes. Focus advised Colorado for Family Values, which spearheaded Amendment 2."

According to an article in Christianity Today, ("Focus Under Fire," Rabney, 3/8/93, p. 60), several days after Focus declared its non-political nature, Focus mailed out several million seven page letters supporting a variety of political issues including anti-gay items, designed to influence political outcomes. According to Rabney, Focus has been greeted by anger from some significant evangelical leaders for its denial or its role in political questions like Amendment 2. One such leader said that Focus "we are not political" statements are dishonest and cause confusion. "If Focus does not want to be perceived as political, it needs to put a gag order on its people who keep making political statements. Evangelicals in Colorado need to decide if we're about anti-gay legislation or proclaiming the gospel, and the two are not necessarily the same thing."

Linda Castrone, staff writer for the Rocky Mountain News reported in an April 8, 1993 article, entitled "Organization Pushes Anti-Gay Rights Video," that Focus on the Family urged its supporters to buy and show copies of the anti-gay video, THE GAY AGENDA, which has been credited with bolstering support for Amendment 2. An article in the April 19th Focus on the Family Citizen Magazine suggests that people "exhibit the film to your Bible study class, club meetings and political gatherings." The magazine further points to the video as a tool with "...a proven track record in fighting homosexual aggression."

Focus on the Family also commissioned an expensive study that was designed to prove that Colorado newspapers were prejudiced against Amendment 2, according to the Rocky Mountain News (3\20\93), "Ministry: Press Anti-Amendment Two" and Church and State Magazine reported in an article entitled "Out of Focus" (Robert Boston, 3/93) that Focus critics have charged that "...just below Focus on the Family's 'God and Family' veneer lies a typical Religious Right organization espousing hostility to the separation of church and state and advancing a religio-political agenda built around Dobson's interpretation of the Bible."

The same article reports that Dobson assumed the head of the politically motivated Family Research Council in 1988, but that Dobson cut formal ties between Focus and the Council because of the Councils overt political activities and the dangers they imposed on Focus' non profit status with the IRS. "We will be legally separate, but spiritually one," Dobson quipped as he took a seat on the Council's Board.

Overall, BBC's Colville stated the opinion that, should Focus decide to pursue legal action against the network, Focus would be hard pressed to prove its case. "Our legal representatives feel that there is little to be concerned about," continued Colville.

WHY THE COLORADO PTA RESOLUTION IS IMPORTANT.....

ONCE, I HAD A FRIEND

by Frank Whitworth

We grew up blocks from each other; his mother was my mother's good friend, he was a year younger than I, he was intelligent, kind and ever friendly; we were in the same boy scout troop and knew all the same people.

Yet, from the time we were ten or eleven on, I would never have admitted to being his friend. You see, he had become identified as being different--he had certain affectations and he just didn't like what most boys liked--sports. He was "artistically" inclined.

It had started as a whisper, his being called queer and fag, but by high school, it was a roar of accusation made by everyone in school. Everyone knew he was a queer.

Everyone, that is, but him.

Despite the fact that I wouldn't "associate" with him in public, I was willing to talk with him and be his friend in private. I don't know why he confided in me but I think he sensed in me something different from the vast majority of the "others" in school.

You see, I know now that I was queer then--I knew it then, but fought it and denied it and I did one hell of a job covering up this perceived "abomination," an act that scarred my psyche for life and made me totally miserable until I came out at age 30.

But that's another story. Suffice to say that with few exceptions, I was not suspect. The point is that I knew I was queer and hid it well while he didn't think he was and was believed to be by everyone.

He confided in me often, and it was often, about the verbal and physical abuse he received because he was "different." He was "perceived" to be queer. There was no one, he felt and I believe to this day, to whom he could turn. Teachers and students alike snickered at him. To my knowledge no teacher--and they all knew about him--sought to counsel him. He was, after all, one of ~~"them."~~ "us."

He told me horrible things that had been done to him. He said that he had never had voluntarily sex with any one but that he had been raped and forced into sexual acts many times by many who were among those who constantly belittled him in public. He told me of two instances when he was raped by the vast majority of members of the local Volunteer Fire Department. The first such happening, he was just short of fourteen and stopped counting after the twentieth time he was anally assaulted that night.

His shame was unbelievable and his fear was great. He did not feel he could turn to any "adult" for help. He knew of nowhere he could turn.

I don't know how, but he made it through school, graduating the year after I had. I did not see him or hear his name for eight years, until his obituary appeared in the local paper that my mother regularly sent me. I decided to go to his funeral.

The coffin was closed--there was little left of him. He had died in Vietnam when he stepped on a land mine while running to assist one more of many soldiers he had run through heavy fire to help that day. It was his job--he was a medic. Draped on his coffin was the American flag topped with the Silver Star, awarded for heroism and valor far beyond the call of duty. Both were presented to his wife and two beautiful children (one of whom he had never seen) at the end of the service.

Despite the fact that the funeral was in the community we grew up in, despite the newspapers declaring him a hero and despite the fact that many we had gone to school with still lived in that community, I was the only one of his peers from our high school to show up to say a soft farewell. I could not help but think that at long last he had proven his manhood.

I was wrong. That night, I went to a local hangout and there were many there who had grown up with and gone to school with him. When I mentioned that I had gone to his funeral that day, there was only one comment--"Why would you go to that fag's funeral?" To my shame, I said nothing.

Today, as I look back, I have to wonder how miserable his years in school were and about the horrors he faced largely alone. My own were bad--his had to have been vastly greater. Knowing that I considered suicide many times before accepting who I was, I now understand his own attempt when he was seventeen. He needed love and understanding--and the ability to discover <u>who he really was</u> from non-judgmental counseling and support--not rejection, hate and condemnation.

My friend deserved a medal far greater than the Silver Star he received in death for having lived so long; for having found out who he was and for having survived the bigotry and prejudices he faced all of his too short life--for being perceived as being "different."

AS WAS EXPECTED, THE PTA FAILED TO PASS THE RESOLUTION PRINTED ON THE OTHER PAGE. ONE IS LED TO WONDER HOW MANY MORE THERE ARE OUT THERE LIKE MY FRIEND WHO WILL SUFFER AS HE DID.

CFV descended on the convention like a plague of locusts, exerting vast pressure on the delegates as well as packing the convention with their own people. Their political power is enormous. One can hope that someday gays and lesbians will wake up and smell the coffee. These people will not stop until they eliminate us from viable participation in government and society and until they establish a theocracy in America.

We should not judge too harshly the good people of the PTA for bowing to this pressure. If indeed there is a judgment day, they will surely fare much better than those of CFV.

GROUND ZERO

May 1994

Office: 1-719-635-6086
Fax: 1-719-635-6106

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2 Emotional Ownership 7 - 10 pm PPGLCC	3 GZ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 7P	4 Diversity Chorus 7 pm	5 PPGLC Bingo 7 pm 21st St. Bingo	6	7
8	9 Browning Book signing Noon, Auraria Emotional Ownership	10 GZ FAMILY CAMPAIGN TASK FORCE 6P	11 PFLAG call 575-8658 Diversity Chorus 7 pm	12 PPGLC Bingo 7 pm 21st St. Bingo	13 NGLTF/Equal.Colo. Movement Building Institute, Denver	14 NGLTF/ Equal.Colo. Movement Building Institute, Denver SOCK HOP 8 - 11 pm Hide-n-Seek
15 NGLTF/ Equal.Colo. Movement Building Institute, Denver Plant/Bake Sale Beer Bust 11 am Hide-n-Seek Newsletter Deadline	16 Newsletter Deadline Emotional Ownership	17 GZ BOARD OF DIRECTORS 7P COLORADO COLLEGE	18 Diversity Chorus 7 pm	19 PPGLC Bingo 7 pm 21st St. Bingo	20	21
22	23 Emotional Ownership	24 GZ FAMILY CAMPAIGN TASK FORCE 6P	25 Diversity Chorus 7 pm	26 PPGLC Bingo 7 pm 21st St. Bingo	27	28
29	30	31	June 1 Diversity Chorus 7 pm	June 2 PPGLC Bingo 7 pm 21st St. Bingo	June 3	June 4 UCRSE Black & White Ball 9 pm Penthouse

Calendar Details...

MAY 2,9,16,& 23, MONDAY EVENINGS, 7:00 - 10:00 PM, EMOTIONAL OWNERSHIP, A Course for Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgendered People, given by Donald Johnson and William Shaffer, at the **Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, Price $50.00.**

MAY 9, MONDAY, NOON, at the AURARIA BOOK CENTER, Denver, Co. Frank Browning will be signing his book The Culture of Desire: Paradox and Perversity in Gay Lives Today For more information call Bobbi Rubingh at (303) 556-3718. The Book Center is located on the first floor of the Auraria Student Union at Lawrence Way and 9th Street in Denver. In this controversial best seller, Frank Browning embarks on a transcontinental exploration into the kaleidoscopic worlds gay men have created. Along the way he discovers the forces that draw gay men together and how those same forces can often destroy them.

Although it's been twenty-five years since the Stonewall riots marked the beginning of the gay liberation movement, the gay culture, as described by Browning, is still in transition. The book explores the variety of gay life -- from tobacco farmers in Kentucky and Cuban couples in Florida, to ACT/UP and Queer Nation activists invading restaurants and suburban shopping malls across America. It dispels the popular notion that there is only one gay life-style. Browning manages to highlight aspects of gay life that make many citizens uneasy; he forces people to question the essence of American culture.

MAY 13, 14, 15, NGLTF and EQUALITY COLORADO, will host a special "movement-building institute" at the Ramada Inn, Denver. Call Sue Anderson (303) 839-5540 for community housing . Call Sue Hyde (617) 492-6393 for more information on the institute. This institute is designed for organizers and activists who want to build a stronger movement and more compassionate communities while combating the growing influence of the radical right-wing in American politics and community life. The institute will give us the opportunity to take stock of how we are meeting the challenges presented by the radical right-wing and will allow us to assess what the impact the right-wing has had on our social change work and our community. The institute will also be a time to talk about our aspirations, strategies and plans for action. It will help us to take the offensive, turning right-wing attacks into opportunities for building stronger and more resilient relationships and alliances among justice-seeking people.

MAY 14, SATURDAY, SOCK HOP II, 8 PM - 11 PM, Branding Iron in the Hide n Seek Complex, fund-raiser for Pridefest '94. The focus of the evening will be a benefit auction featuring items from many local businesses. Also, there will be contests such as hula hoop, jello bake off, dancing and bubble gum blowing, all of which will precede the Prom Queen crowning (no pretty girls need apply). So haul out your old nylon net ball gowns and your best rayon bowling shirts and join the United Court and Pridefest for Sock Hop II.

MAY 15, SUNDAY, PLANT AND BAKE SALE AND BEER BUST, Hide n Seek, 11 AM.

JUNE 4, SATURDAY, UCRSE BLACK AND WHITE BALL, 9 PM, The Penthouse, a benefit for the Pikes Peak Hospice.

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JULIE A. WOLFE
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Donna Bacon
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Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 633-7101

THE COLORADO PTA RESOLUTION

(The entire PTA resolution is printed here to give our members and readers the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the real thing and thus be ready to refute the lies, myths and fear mongering being carried on by Colorado for Family Values, and their associates, in regard the true meaning and intent of this document.)

PROMOTING ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY, BISEXUALITY AND TRANSSEXUALITY AND OPPOSING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUTH WHO ARE, BELIEVE THEY ARE, OR ARE PERCEIVED TO BE HOMOSEXUAL, BISEXUAL OR TRANSSEXUAL.

WHEREAS, National PTA 1190 Resolution on DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS AND STAFF states that, "One mission of National PTA is to support and speak on behalf of ALL children and youth in the schools and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decision affecting children; and whereas, prejudice, bigotry and racism are harmful to children and youth, and have no place in a just and democratic society;" and

WHEREAS, the acceptance of bias against youth who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual legitimizes prejudice and discrimination. The lack of access to information, and/or censorship of information presented to students about homosexuality, bisexuality or transsexuality limits their ability to make informed decisions; and

WHEREAS, People who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual are among the most frequent victims of hate violence today. Studies of violence against people who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual show that they have been punched, hit, kicked, beaten, chased or followed because of their sexual status; and an overwhelming majority have been subjected to verbal abuse. Teenagers are responsible for much of the violence, and the settings where incidents of verbal harassment and anti-homosexual violence occurred included junior high schools, senior high schools, and colleges; and

WHEREAS, Although statistical information varies, studies have shown that up to 48% of youth who are, believe that are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual have run away from home, or been forced to leave home because of conflicts over their sexual status. Research indicates that as much as 50% of homeless youth are, believe that are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual; and

WHEREAS, Research also indicates that homosexual, bisexual and transsexual practices can involve grave health risks; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that discrimination and confusion about sexuality causes some students who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual to learn less effectively or to drop out of school; and

WHEREAS, the foregoing factors have contributed to suicide as the leading cause of death among youth who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual. Research shows that female homosexuals may be two times more likely to attempt suicide, and male homosexuals may be six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts, and youth who may be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual may comprise up to 30% of completed youth suicides annually, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Colorado PTA opposes discrimination, harassment and violence against the youth members of our community who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Colorado PTA inform and educate the groups it cooperates with and Colorado PTA constituent units so that they may inform and educate parents, students, teachers, school personnel and community members within their influence about the harmful effects of discrimination against youth who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual or transsexual; and that Colorado PTA encourage access to full and age-appropriate information about homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality, and oppose censorship of such information' and encourage presentations about homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality that included diverse points of view; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Colorado PTA cooperate with other groups to further the education of Colorado PTA on the issues of youth who are, believe they are, or are perceived to be homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Colorado PTA urge that state and national legislation and school board policies relating to programs serving children and youth be amended to include the words "gender or sexuality" in non-discrimination policies and that Colorado PTA amend the non-discrimination policy of the Colorado PTA bylaws, Article IX; Members and Dues Section 2, to include "gender or sexuality," and urge amendment of the stated section of the same words of the National bylaws, Article VII; Members and Dues, Section 2, to included "gender, or sexuality;" and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution, with appropriate clerical amending, be submitted to National PTA convention delegates for consideration.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER BASHES GAYS/LESBIANS/GROUND ZERO

The Colorado Springs Human Rights Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, April 14, 1994. Fortunately, a Ground Zero Watch Support Team member was present to alert the organization to happenings at that meeting.

Commissioner Vince D'Acchioli, who runs EVERY HOME FOR CHRIST, a fundamentalist organization, seemed to be inspired by our representative identifying himself as being from Ground Zero. He launched an attack on gay and lesbian lifestyle, using THE USUAL litany of hate and misinformation that the right is famous for delivering on cue whenever it gets the chance.

Something new was added, however. A question of concern has arisen at Commission meetings of late. It arose out of Commission Chairperson Jim Musante attending a meeting of the Colorado Spring Minority Coalition (open to the public and informal--no speeches or presentations) to discuss: 1. The role of the Human Relations Commission, 2. How the Minority Coalition could help in empowering the Commission and, 3. The inter relatedness of the Commission with the State Division of Civil Rights (Jack Lang y Marques, Division Director, was also present at the Coalition meeting.)

The question: "Who is empowered to speak for the commission and who empowers them?" Commissioner David White was concerned that a commissioner, speaking or attending a meeting, could be thought to be representing the commission when he was not. He offered a proposal that would establish a procedure for such appearances. The implication of this proposal seems to be that commissioners lose their individual rights and identities when becoming commissioners.

Commissioner D'Acchioli then took aim at Ground Zero, saying that a commissioner speaking to Ground Zero would be like a commissioner speaking to the KKK. Later, he said that he would find it even more offensive for a commissioner to speak to Ground Zero.

Responds Ground Zero member, Frank Whitworth. "Whoa, Mr. Commissioner. Don't you think you are aiming at the wrong group with this analogy? Ground Zero does not advocate segregating, disenfranchising, eliminating from governmental participation or degrading of anyone based on their cultural, religious or ethnic identity, pride or heritage. We are, in fact, quite the opposite. We support and work diligently in causes related to anti-discrimination and suppression of all of our rights. We believe that all people have the right to be equal and free, to express themselves and to be represented by and be a part of our constitutional government. We even defend Colorado for Family Value's right to do what they are doing. In fact, we defend the KKK's rights also, even though we disagree with them at least as much as we disagree with CFV."

"Ground Zero," Whitworth continues, "is a non-profit organization that primarily addresses issues of concern to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered community, working through education, community outreach and coalition building. We do not preach hate or intolerance and are totally inclusive in our membership. Perhaps, Mr. D'Acchioli, you were thinking about COLORADO FOR FAMILY VALUES or THE CHRISTIAN COALITION, instead of Ground Zero, in your statement."

Commissioner Alan Osur seemed quite perturbed by the comparison, stating that "I don't like that at all [Vince's] comparison of Ground Zero to the KKK. That was an awful comparison. It turned my stomach a little bit."

When Commissioner Robert Ware opined that "You can't legislate morality," Commissioner D'Acchioli jumped in with an "Oh yes you can," to which Ware responded, "We shouldn't condemn without due process of Law."

Whitworth noted that, "Notwithstanding the above, another concern arises in reference to the direction of the views and attack by Commissioner D'Acchioli. Perhaps the name of the Commission should be changed to The Colorado Springs Human (but not all) Relations Commission. Even better might be The Colorado Springs Fundamentalist Human Relations Commission. It would seem that a Human Relations Commission should have a primary goal of improving our understanding of each other and of helping us to learn to co-exist on this planet. Perhaps outreach and attempts to educate extremist fundamentalism-based groups like the COALITION ON REVIVALISM, THE CHRISTIAN COALITION, COLORADO FOR FAMILY VALUES and the KU KLUX KLAN should be a part of the Commission's agenda. Certainly ignoring groups out on the fringe like these will not make them go away."

Many commissioners, perhaps a majority, seemed to believe, by the tone of their statements, that the Commission should be doing more outreach, not less, and that individual commissioners be limited solely by being required to say that they are speaking only for themselves, not the entire commission, when they are doing so. In answering the allegation that when a commissioner attends an event, he is automatically assumed to be representative of the Commission, Commissioner Alexander Soifer replied that he often goes to outside meetings. He detailed going to a recent meeting at his school where Will Perkins spoke as a representative of Colorado for Family Values. Soifer offered his own opinion of Colorado for Family Values: "They have little to do with family and little to do with values." Soifer's pointed out that his being there obviously didn't mean he was endorsing CFV for himself or the Commission. He was simply gathering information.

Other commissioners have told this reporter that the lambaste by Commissioner D'Acchioli had little support and probably would not have received a majority vote. There was, however, an interest in establishing when the Commission itself was speaking officially and who speaks for it. The Chair assigned the questioned to a committee for further study.

According to Whitworth, "A Ground Zero representative has attended Commission meetings for several months. This is the first time its discussions have ventured out of internal process and into the community. While the direction of this particular discussion was somewhat alarming, at least an issue was raised beyond what constitutes a quorum."

Commission members, and their mailing addresses, should you desire to express your concerns, opinions and viewpoints (be nice) in writing, are:

STEVE AMELLA, 4255 Bardot Drive, 80920; COLLEEN BRAY, 5560 Buckskin Pass Drive, 80917; VINCE D'ACCHIOLI, Every Home for Christ, P.O. Box 35930, 80935-3593; DOUG DOUGLAS, 2922 Highland Drive, 80909; CHERYL FIELDS, 2832 Keystone Circle, 80918; SANDRA HERNANDEZ, 412 Columbia Rd, 80904; ED JONES, 844 Bennett Ave., 80909; JAMES MUSANTE, 1730 North Nevada Ave., 80907-7457; ALAN OSUR, 335 Discovery Court, 80919; PAULINE PRUSCH, 3 S. Tejon, Suite 200, 80903; ALEXANDER SOIFER, 885 Red Mesa Dr., 80906; CECILIA SONG, 3847 E. Pikes Peak Ave., 80909; AMY STEPHENS, 3625 Opal Court, 80918; ROBERT WARE, 7520 Vineland Trail, 80911; DAVID WHITE, 3645 Trailspur Place, 80906.

MULTI-CULTURALISM V. MONO-CULTURALISM

by Frank Whitworth

At the Colorado Unity Rally for Equality in Colorado Springs[1] in October, 1993, Yolanda King compared attacks on multi-culturalism as essentially the same as attacks on integration in the sixties. The very word multi-culturalism excites emotional responses from both the right and the left.

The Radical Right, propelled by orthodox fundamentalism, promotes what is essentially mono-culturalism--one country--one people--one culture--one language--one god. It is its contention that the other choice, multi-culturalism, will result in "BALKANIZATION" OF AMERICA. Arch-conservatives would have one believe that it is the differences between people in the Balkans--their adherence to the religions and culture of their forefathers--that has brought about the atmosphere that allows elements from all sides to be totally intolerant of the others and, in at least one case, to use the solution of genocide to eliminate the perceived enemy.

Mono-culturalism is not, the right contends, the same as racism. Simply put, it is culture, language, religion and beliefs that are the important issues. Color of skin in not a deciding factor. Thus, the Right justifies its support of "English Only" and opposition to curricula that teach multi-culturalism, diversity and respect for other cultures, and ones own culture, unless it happens to be Anglo-European. It is the reason why Phyllis Schlafly's EAGLE FORUM often attacks with ferocity courses in public schools that teach of the Native American heritage and culture.

Like ethnic and other cultural minorities who have not been anglicized out of their culture and language roots, homosexuals are "different" from the orthodox fundamentalist vision of what we all should be. They, too, are anathema. Homosexuals lend something else to the formula--they can easily be held up to scorn and fear that in turn can be used to produce hate. Thus vilified, homosexuals can be easily made into a threat--if you will--that can be used to excite many to join the ranks of the fundamentalists and fill their coffers.

Chip Berlet observes

"In identifying 'goodness' and 'superiority' with 'us,' there was a tendency in fascist movements to identify 'evil' with 'them.' This process involves scape- goating and dehumanization. It was then an easy step to blame all societal problems on 'them,' and presuppose a conspiracy of these evildoers which had emasculated and humiliated the idealized core group of the nation. To solve society's problems one need only unmask the conspirators and eliminate them."[2]

Those on the Left contradict the Right's view of multi-culturalism. It is not differences that are causing the problems in the Balkans, they say. It is the failure to understand, accept and respect each others differences that is the problem. They point out that clerical fundamentalism in that region has set those of differing religions against each other. Inhabitants there have spent centuries building toward this war of cultures and religions instead of spending centuries learning to live together in mutual respect and understanding. Such will be the fate of America, the Left contends, if we do not eliminate irrational prejudice and intolerance and if we do not foster mutual respect and understanding for each other. Ingrained differences are not going to be eliminated. We are a nation of individuals and we value our uniqueness.

Mono-culturalism's glaring principle is simply that one can be from any place of origin and of any color as long as one is white Anglo-European Christian (fundamentalist) in one's heart and mind. In other words it's all right for one to be black, brown or yellow--as long as one is white.

America's greatness, the Left believes, is found in its ability to have so many unique and differing elements on one hand and to be able to come together to support its mutual interests and for the good of the country on the other.

When one realizes that orthodox fundamentalism is driven to force itself on the rest of society and to establish theocracy (their version of a Christian nation) on America, one can understand the significance of the following Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph [3] Editorial statement of May 18th, 1954, on the subject of the need for the Separation of Church and State:

"To begin at the beginning, the substance of freedom is the right of the individual to make choices without threat or hindrance. That right is most highly cherished in the field of spiritual values. How we shall worship God or whether we shall worship at all is a matter we deem most private. ***For that reason, we insist that it must be outside the scope of political power: we know that if any religious order possess itself of political power, it would be inclined to use it for the propagation of its dogmas and the suppression of others.*** *Nothing else can be expected because religious organizations must logically consider dogmas other than its own erroneous if not sinful."*

The editor of the extremely conservative Gazette of the time was most perceptive and quite insightful. Inevitably, a religious element given political power turns to forcing its view on others. Mono-culturalism is simply orthodox fundamentalism's newest approach for suppression and oppression of those who differ from its view of acceptability.

[1] *Colorado Springs is called by many "The Vatican of Fundamentalism," having become in recent years the headquarters for a vast number of evangelical organizations, including Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family, that exerts significant influence on political and social issues of the day. It was here that English Only and the Anti Gay Colorado Amendment 2 were born. Gay rights Activists have dubbed Colorado Springs the "Belly of the Beast." It does seem to be the source for much of fundamentalist activity and policy making in America, including anti-gay measures cropping up across the Country under the tutelage of Colorado for Family Values, the organization that brought forth Amendment 2.*

[2] *Bellant, Russ, Old Nazis, the New Right and the Republican Party (Boston: South End Press, 1991), p. vii)*

[3] *To understand the significance of the quote from the "Gazette" one needs to understand that the Gazette is a part of the extremely right wing FREEDOM NEWSPAPER chain and is, in Colorado Springs, completely in the corner of Fundamentalist and Radical Right Wing Organization. Today, one can assume without significant fear of contradiction that the Gazette would not endorse this statement.*

TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY IN UPROAR OVER NON-INCLUSION IN STONEWALL 25 LANGUAGE

The Stonewall Revolt essentially happened as a result of action by Drag Queens and other Transgendered Persons in Greenwich Village who had grown tired of an oppressive and reactionary police department. Without the actions of this community, this "defining" moment in the movement for equality for Gays and Lesbians likely would never have occurred.

Today, the transgendered community, led by Phyllis Frye of the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, Inc.(ICTLEP), is calling foul in regard a policy by the Stonewall "25" Committee that determined that there would be no mention of "transgendered" people in the official name of the parade commemorating the Stonewall Revolt.

The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) has joined with ICTLEP in calling for the Stonewall 25 Committee to reverse its stand, issuing the following resolution on March 19:

Whereas, persons of alternative gender roles and identities were the principle and most visible participants in the Stonewall incident of 1969, and, Whereas, by not recognizing the transgendered community in Stonewall 25's title, you have disenfranchised us, and in essence have done to us what the straight community has done to you, and Whereas the [IFGE] is one of the gender community's largest representative organizations, therefore,

Be it resolved, that the Board of Directors of IFGE respectfully, but strongly, urges the steering committee of Stonewall 25 to include the word "transgender" in the title of the Stonewall 25 events, demonstration and march, and further expresses to the steering committee its profound disappointment and dismay that the official name of this event fails to recognize and dignify those whose courage and determination carried the Stonewall incident of 1969 to a successful conclusion.

Todd Burman, State of Colorado Coordinator for "Stonewall 25" noted in an interview with Ground Zero that the March is sponsored by the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). Originally, there was reluctance to team the march with a celebration of Stonewall 25. Delegates from other countries took exception because there had been significant events surrounding gay and lesbian rights in Europe long before Stonewall 25. Nonetheless, approval was given giving the Stonewall 25 Committee permission to link the events. Another National Stonewall Committee Representative, however, told this reporter that the ILGA pushed its way in on the Stonewall Celebration, not the other way around.

According to Groves, the ILGA has declined to change the name to include the actual words transgendered and bisexual in the title of the March because the words do not mean the same thing in all languages and, in truth, in at least one instance, the translation is considered an insult. At the same time, Burman continued, all domestic literature heavily emphasizes concerns of the transgendered and bisexual community.

On April 16, 1994, Phyllis Frye of ICTLEP noted in a release that the Stonewall "25" Committee continues to refuse to include the words "Transgender, Drag and Bisexual in the title of the event," which will remain 'STONEWALL 25, THE INTERNATIONAL MARCH ON THE UNITED NATIONS TO AFFIRM THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LESBIAN AND GAY PEOPLE.' Frye, therefore, issued a call for non-violent acts of civil disobedience during the parade with the intention of forcing arrest of the protest demonstrators.

Training is required to officially join the protest. Anyone interested is urged by Frye to call 1-212-473-4750. Protest statements may be faxed to the Stonewall Committee at 1-212-626-6965.

Ground Zero has by policy included the Bisexual and Transgendered Community without exception in its Mission Statement and all statements and documents issued by it and has encouraged Stonewall 25 to do the same.

WHOSE RESOURCE?

Ground Zero takes pride in the fact that it supplies many individuals, groups and organizations information in the area and across the nation. In late March, however, we were asked for information by a horse of a different color.

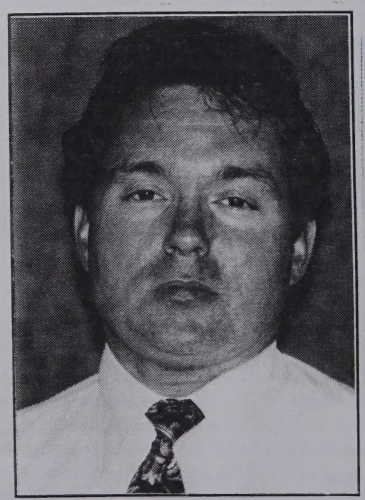
Good old Kevin Tebedo, our friend from Colorado for Family Values, called to inquire about a national meeting of gays and lesbians that is being talked about for Colorado Springs in the Fall. Could Ground Zero fill him in on it, he inquired?

Well, in fact the office staff had heard rumors of such a meeting and understood that it would be primarily a workshop type of activity. But, rather than go into too much detail, the staff referred Kevin to one of the organizers of this event in Denver.

A few minutes later, he called back. There was a local organizer. Could GZ get him into touch with her?? Well, true to its reputation of doing its best for all inquiries made to it, GZ tried.

Well, the two never made contact but that didn't stop Kevin from acting like he knew all the details on a Chuck Baker show a few days later. Interestingly enough, the workshop had become AN EVENT, according to one of the participants on the show, that would bring thousands of gays and lesbians to Colorado Springs to invade everyone's front and back yards and flaunt themselves in front of everyone.

Truth is not always stranger than fiction and truth does not always best serve the goals of those who place achieving the end they seek above the means they use to get there.



CFV director Kevin Tebedo

MOHR VISIT

Author Richard Mohr appeared for Ground Zero and other groups to speak on the topic of his new book, A More Perfect Union: Why Straight America Must Support Gay Rights. The meeting was well-attended and those who attended were challenged by several ideas.

The book, largely designed as an outreach to mainstream America, is challenging and informative. Because he was speaking largely to a gay and lesbian friendly audience, he chose to take off in a more in depth exploration of the values of activism and civil disobedience. He also spoke to the question of NAMBLA.

His point on NAMBLA was missed by many in the audience and caused upset. Exploration in later conversation and on Channel 11's JENNINGS AND JENNINGS Show the next day further clarified his beliefs.

The point that he was attempting to make was that all that NAMBLA says is not wrong. You could, indeed, say the same about Hitler. NAMBLA does have a policy that believes restrictions on sexual relations between men and boys should not exist. Almost every mainstream GLBT organization has long since condemned that stand and any efforts that are meant to bring this platform into existence.

At the same time, NAMBLA believes that the inequities of ages of consent must be corrected. There are differences from one state to the other ranging from fourteen to twenty in America and some as low as thirteen in Europe. Further, often penalties are highest for homosexual men who violate the law and lowest for heterosexual women who do so. Penalties should be evenly meted out for all. In addition, NAMBLA believes that there should be a graduated system of penalties for violating the law. Now, in many areas, a nineteen year old who has a relationship with a sixteen year old can be punished with the same sentence as a fifty year old who molests a seven year old. These are areas with which many may find agreement.

It does not change the fact that, just as it is hoped that all condemn and reject Hitler, we also condemn and reject NAMBLA. Their goals go far beyond correcting some inequities of the law. The question that was never asked Mohr at the lecture was "Do you support or endorse NAMBLA." It was asked on TV the next day. The answer, a simple but definitive NO.

Many people who left the lecture the night before felt much better the following day after this point was made. There were still some differences of opinion on other issues, including outing, raised by Mohr in regard to types of activism but they were just that, differences of opinion, not major concerns on a vital and defining points.

Those who had the opportunity to spend time with Richard during his stay found him informative and a valuable resource.

(As a note of interest, The Gill Foundation agreed to triple all donations above ten dollars the night of the Mohr lecture. The resulting support was very rewarding at a time when finances are a great concern. Thanks to those of you who responded and thanks Tim.)

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Tamara Bartlett (719) 475-2508

A LETTER TO THE GT EDITOR

by Frank Whitworth

I am increasingly concerned about the politicization of the PTA resolution regarding prevention of harassment of Gay and Lesbian Students and assisting those who are faced with challenges and questions among our youth and, indeed, among their parents. In another time and age and in an era when dogma and clerical fundamentalism does not overshadow reason, this would not be an issue.

Several days ago, the County Coroner informed the public that out of twelve teen suicides in 1993, he was not aware of any being related to homosexual causes. He must know that most youth who choose this senseless route do so in utter despair, suffering self-hate, rejection and fear of being exposed. To the largest degree, they are most fearful of peer and parental knowledge. It is not often that they take their lives to prevent knowledge and exposure only to expose themselves in a suicide note.

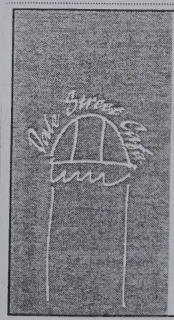
While the Coroner stated that he knew of no instances, there are those of us in the community who know this is not entirely accurate. Our best information indicates that three were probably related to these issues and two others may have been, the news of which was suppressed by the families.

I should like to deliver a message to youth in our area that are feeling these things and feel they are alone and have no where to turn. You are **NOT** alone. You are loved and cherished and you are one of many. Your life is not at an end but just beginning. You can learn to see and appreciate your beauty and your value to yourself, your family and your community. You are unique in that every human is unique--but you are not alone.

A non-gay operated, professionally run group exists to help youth who have serious problems and questions about their sexuality. It is non-judgmental, does not proselytize and seeks only to give support. Though we have no direct contact, Ground Zero is aware of how to contact this group and will help those who wish to make this contact. Please feel free to call us.

Parents of children who face these situations often need support also. A wonderful organization, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays has a very active local chapter which Ground Zero will also help you contact.

Both of these organizations are discreet and will protect your identity. They seek only to help you through difficult times.



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CHARTER SCHOOL COMMUNITY PRESENTS CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Since last September, the Charter School Community Committee has been meeting to prepare a proposal to establish a Charter School for Students at Risk in School District Eleven. On April 19th, they presented the fruit of their work, an application, to the District Eleven School Board.

Ground Zero Educational Support Team Members have lent technical assistance to the Committee in the form of administrative and secretarial support. They have attended all meetings in recent months and have been of assistance in developing the application. Essentially, by the time they joined the committee, the program was designed and its mission defined. Further, a Board to run the school for the first year, until elections could be held involving parents, teachers and the committee, had already been determined. The Board represents a broadbase of highly qualified ethnic community members.

Students at Risk are essentially those who, for whatever reason, are at risk of dropping out of school and need a different atmosphere and style of teaching than that available in the standard classroom to succeed. Ethnic, cultural, economic, social, mental and physical challenges that prevent a student from being successful in the standard public school are some of the reasons a student may be considered as at risk. The Charter School will strive to fulfill that need for two hundred students in School District Eleven.

It is hoped that the Charter School will commence operation in the Fall of 1994. Current plans are incomplete as to the location for the school but a full scale search is in progress to find the right place. By law, public hearings on the application must be held within sixty days of the presentation. If you have an interest, look for announcements of these meetings and plan on attending. There is also a requirement that a community of interest be established through petition and they are currently circulating. Keep an eye out for those to sign also.

VATICAN TURNABOUT

In what may be considered a remarkably in-depth understanding that one has not in recent years come to expect of the VATICAN under the current Pope, a new document issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission called "THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH" has addressed the subject of the fundamentalist approach to interpreting and applying the teachings of the Bible.

While the report affirms the "...validity of studying biblical texts from historical and literary points of view...", it warns for the faithful not to lose sight of the Bible as a document of faith and God's word. It also defends the fundamentalist viewpoint that insists on "...the divine inspiration of the Bible and certain "biblical truths'" but that is the limits of its defense of fundamentalism.

It says "Its [fundamentalism's] relying upon a non critical reading of certain texts of the Bible serves to reinforce political ideas and social attitudes that are marked by prejudices--racism for example--quite contrary to the Christian gospel." It goes on, THE FUNDAMENTALIST APPROACH IS DANGEROUS, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life." "...Without saying as much in so many word, fundamentalism actually invites people to a kind of intellectual suicide."

There is little else that one can find to add to this statement except to say that the viewpoint expressed by the Vatican report mirrors the fears that many have in regard fundamentalist use and misuse of certain passages of the bible to affirm discrimination and intolerance of those who do not buy into their ideology. This is not unlike similar approaches taken by fascists and oppressive movements through the ages.

Think your friends might be missing something? They Are! Why not share this copy of the Ground Zero Newsletter with your friends, and let them fill out the membership form below to start receiving ALL the Ground Zero information, ALL the time.

Yes, I want to join Ground Zero in its fight against "2". Enclosed is $_____.
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